

Dear Palo Alto High School Students and Parents,

July 27, 2020

I am excited to introduce myself as your new Principal. I will never forget the day I was officially named as the new Paly Principal. I am positive that many of you remember that day as well—Friday, March 13, 2020—the final day that many schools held their last day of in-person classes. Since this day, the world of education has changed dramatically, but the purpose remains the same. We need to ensure that we continue to provide our students with the most effective and safe learning environment that we can create.

My career as a high school principal has encompassed adversity and opportunity, including unforeseen challenges. I have learned to maintain a positive outlook during the challenges by building a school community focused on clear outcomes and goals, while fostering collective efficacy and urgency. An important ingredient of maintaining a resilient school, that is adaptive to the on-going challenges that present themselves, is to provide consistent and constant methods of communication and collaboration. Providing opportunities for the inclusion of student, parent, and staff voice will be a top priority of mine as I continue to learn about the Paly climate and culture, including the needs of the community.

My involvement in Paly has steadily increased since I became your new principal, with a steep level of activity occurring this past July. Already, I have met with several groups of students, parents, and staff members. The more I learn and the more people I meet, it is clear to me that everyone is here for the right reason—Viking Success!

Like so many of you, I am restless to know exactly what the school year will bring for us in public education. Palo Alto High School has long been recognized as a top-tier school where students receive robust and ongoing opportunities to learn and grow. This is a tradition that I will focus on continuing. Be assured, Paly students will continue to share stories of how they reached the highest levels of academic rigor in our school and launched to the futures of their choice. Paly students will continue to create stories of overcoming significant struggles and opening doors to opportunity. And, Paly students will continue finding vibrant and invigorating ways to express their skills, talents and interest. Together, I am confident that as a school community, we will learn to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic, and continue to provide equitable access and opportunity to all students at Paly.

I realize that the announcement that we will begin our school year online is not ideal. The enormous task of providing an effective learning environment has never been more important. When schools transitioned to online teaching and learning last spring, the experience was met with several unknowns and missteps. I am confident that with the high levels of collaborative planning and teacher preparation, we will see an increased level of educational opportunities with the addition of clear and articulated expectations for both students and staff during online instruction.

Before the start of the school year, all certificated staff will have participated in several online learning modules to help prepare teachers for a variety of instructional delivery models now

necessary for online learning. The courses cover several areas of teaching and learning, including equity and inclusive learning environments, educational technology, pedagogy for online and hybrid learning and assessment. We are also focused on what a typical day will look like for students and staff, as the concept of “typical” remains under constant fluctuation. Some developments that you might be aware of include:

- Daily structured schedules to avoid conflicts and provide predictability.
- Daily synchronous contact between students and instructors.
- Assignment of grades and routine feedback.
- PAUSD+ will be in place, in compliance with county health orders, for grades 6-12 students in need of in-person assistance.

Although I have been working most of the summer, the first official day back for school administrators is Monday, July 27. At both the district and school level, we will be moving quickly to create and communicate programs, expectations and opportunities that will be necessary for a successful school start-up and school year. You will soon receive detailed communication, that will hopefully address the many questions and concerns that I have heard from students and parents over the past several weeks.

Finally, I wanted to communicate with you my Paly Promise of providing all students with an equitable educational experience that focuses on high levels of student engagement, a leadership style that embraces communication and transparency, and a longevity plan that includes consistent leadership for many years to come. Even with all of the uncertainty, my excitement of being the next Paly Principal grows each day, and I can't wait to meet all of you in the upcoming future.

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Sincerely,
Brent Kline, Principal
Palo Alto High School